DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 124 210 IR 003 604

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TITLE Effectiveness of Effort: Controlling Daily Events.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Association for Educational Communications and Technology Annual Conference (Anaheim, California, March 28-April 2, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Audiovisual Centers; Educational Facilities; Higher Education; *Instructional Materials Centers; *Management Systems; *Organizational Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS AECT 76

ABSTRACT

Consideration of various systems for management and budget of time were presented in this script for a slide-tape presentation. Logical approaches to planning and carrying out the plan according to goals for a media center were given in light of various contingencies which can arise, such as equipment breakdown. It was suggested that controlling daily events entails more than scheduling those fixed activities of planned equipment circulation, production activities, and appointments. Flexibility to take care of interruptions, such as telephone, salesmen and equipment malfunction was necessary. While it was concluded that each media center should devise a system that can meet its own needs, consideration of effectiveness may be dealt with from the point of view of: 1) productivity for effort; 2) products from effort; or 3) services for effort. (HAB)

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EFFECTIVENESS OF EFFORT - CONTROLLING DAILY EVENTS

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The following is the script for a slide-tape prisentation presented at Association for Educational Communication and Technology convention in Anaheim, California in April, 1976.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Consideration of the various systems for management and budgeting bombards one with alphabet soup.....

PPBS (Planning-Programming-Budgeting System)

PPBES (Planning-Programming-Budgeting Evaluation System)

ERMS (Educational Resources Management System)

ERMD (Educational Resources Management Design)

RMS (Resource Management System)

PB (Program Budgeting)

all of which outline a logical approach to planning and carrying out the plan according to the goals.

An efficiency expert called in to study our Media Service would be a candidate for a coronary, of not an effective short circuit before the experience ended. No matter how carefully one works out a schedule there are contingencies which arise that disrupt the best laid plans. Who can plan for the equipment breakdown: the missing film taken for preview; the projector moved from room 106 to 310 (without notice); the student assistant who fails to report for work; as infinitum? As with other similar operations one must consider those things which can be controlled and form a

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master plan from there. It need not be exotic, but balanced organizational capability should be considered. What good are materials with no equipment, or hardware without software?

Controlling daily events entails more than scheduling those fixed activities of planned equipment circulation, production activities, and appointments. It means being flexible enough to take care of all the interruptions:

telephone

salesmen

equipment malfunctions

The consideration of effectiveness may be dealt with from the point of view of (1) productivity for effort, (2) products from effort, or (3) services for effort. All of these may be recorded and reported for administrative evaluation.

Devise a system which fits your needs. Study what you are doing and decide the approach you feel will require the least upset in your present operation. The adaptations of current paperwork to include additional data may be your solution. One approach is to take work orders and determine the average time to complete any given operation, thus a code can be developed to tell how much time was required to do the job and any charges that need to be made. Ideally, the most effective system would be one which did not call for a charge-back account, but some schools may not have the funds to absorb these through the administrative budget nor have enough data to establish a convincing argument that this is the most effective approach.

Basic problems of equipment circulation are not only a matter of logistics, but bulb replacement, minor repair in field, equipment reserves, and human error. One has to know what equipment is readily available, what one can lay hands on, what is to be returned to service.

A computer could do this easily, but not everyone can afford a computer, therefore, paperwork has to suffice. The monumental task begins with knowing what is available from information provided from a gross list of the number of available items and a V-file of all equipment and its location. Booking is then done for an available poece by obtaining the essential information of "Who? What? When? Where?" The effectiveness of this effort is reflected in a monthly report which indicates that the equipment was used and how many times. This report is not 100% accurate with conventional classroom use because it will not show that an overhead sent out one hour was only turned on for five minutes while another was used the full hour, but at least it was available for the professor's use.

The use of personal contact with faculty is increased in number when the person is assigned to deliver three orders for equipment, leave it, and go to the next task as opposed to remaining with the equipment. The argument for a student staying with the equipment is to operate it, thus leaving the instructor free to teach, as well as, saving wear and tear on both equipment and materials. Our view is that the equipment should be delivered, set-up ready to run and left, so that the student may contunue on to class or other assignments. In this case, time is more important than the rare instance of extensive damage to hardware and/or software. This is also necessary because

our operation only has six students and two technicians to service 257 faculty members.

The students work an average of three hours per day and average two students working per hour. Not much help for the volume, so we have to use the most effective means we can devise to render maximum service. This is certainly a basic problem with all facilities which offer service in an educational environment.

If one is not only concerned with the apparent effectiveness as measured by a basic subjective evaluation, such as the strategy to use one student to service four classrooms per hour as opposed to four students to service the same number, then a specific formula may be utilized. One such formula is a ratio between actual output within a given time frame, as opposed to the planned output within the same time frame. This formula was devised by Carl Candoli and included in his book: School Business Administration: A Planning Approach.

Planning for the effective utilization of staff should should entail the allocation and clarification of duties in such a way that all personnel clearly know what his or her job entails, who they answer to in the chain of command in all instances so that time is not list in a decision-making process conflict.

The fluxuating schedule is less evident in software production as these are items usually planned for in advance. The occasional last minute need consists of prepared masters for transparencies, a quick and dirty (self-made) master, or a sign which can be turned out by student assistants. The scheduling then is one of determining a realistic date for completion of the request, and following through.

A chalkboard serves as a daily reminder of events, to coordinate efforts, and to determine those assignments which can be done by student assistants. There is a thrill in wiping out a completed obligation!

Effort is termined effective in production when the product is put to use. This reflects satisfaction with the product and re-use indicates some degree of effectiveness in accomplishing the desired results. Be it one slide or a program, the effort is worth the expense in time and material when used to its potential. And the better your plan for production along a mass or assembly line approach, the more software one can turn out. Of course, the visual has to be planned to be effective - how is it to be used - will it be explained by the audio message - does it explain itself?

Is the audio well balanced with the background and is the volume and tone suitable to the audience? These are just some of the considerations for effective software production.

Now comes the issue of cost-effectiveness, and the seemingly endless questions of accountability. One system for determing if it is cost-effective to create a given piece of software is to determine (1) if the item is already available for purchase at a reasonable fee, and (2) how long it might take to get the item. If the answers to both are reasonable, it might be more economical to purchase than to create the item(s). To figure the cost of production first determine (1) what any given amount of time is worth by figuring the salary of the person who will be doing the job, (2) how long will it take, and (3) what materials will be used.

If facilities are available, effectiveness may be increased by

letting faculty members have access to a production center where they may turn out quick work without calling upon graphic or other professional staff. With a super budget, or lenient bookkeeping systems, a facility may effectively service student visualizations. This service would increase effectiveness of student presentations and add and important dimension to the total program. The school does not need to support this program - just supply personnel to help with production when needed - all supplies would be paid for by the students wishing to use supplementary media in their classes.

How effective the effort is ultimately measured by answering the simple question - was it worth it? (in terms of cost, time, and educational benefit). Think on these things as accountability is stressed in the improvement of institutional integrity in the teaching-learning process. As a parting thought.....one effective approach to keep in mind is flexibility in conjunction with control and planning.

As Murphy's Law states:

"Nothing is as easy as it looks.
Everything takes longer than you expect.
And it anything can go wrong - it will
at the worst possible moment!"

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